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Taiwan's Push for Societal Resilience

A Progress Report on Energy, Medical, and Digital Communications Lines of Effort

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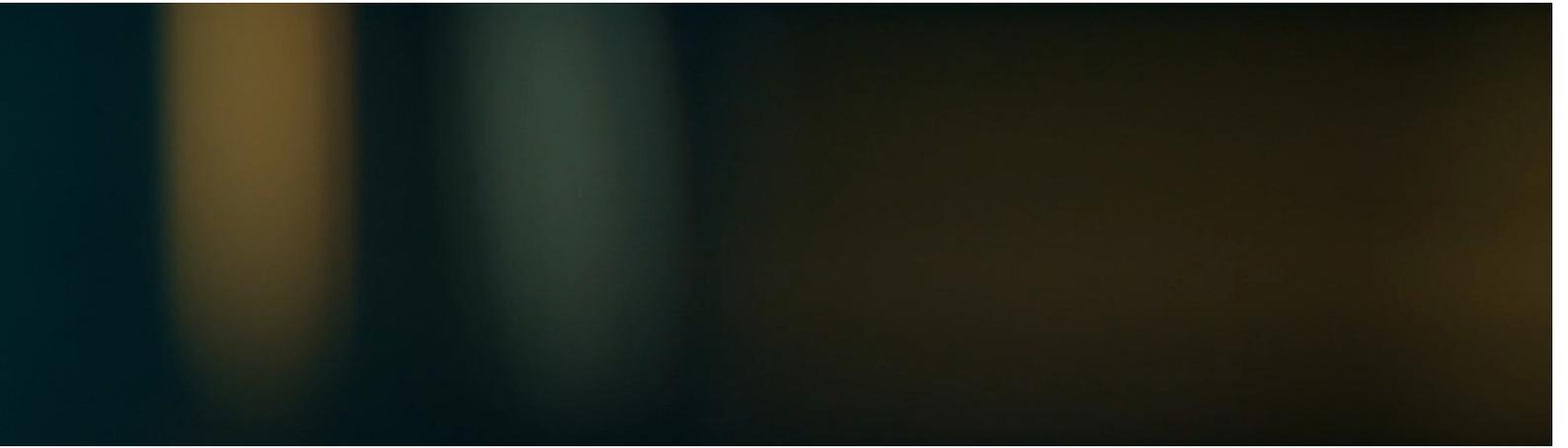
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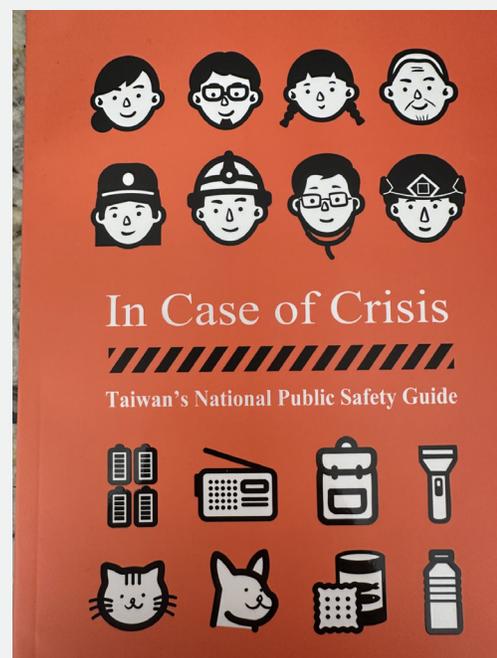
Introduction

Societal resilience efforts are not completely new in Taiwan. After the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake, the government began investing in community-level disaster response networks and expanding the role of local governments in emergency management. During the presidencies of Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou, authorities enhanced civil defense planning, established the National Disaster Prevention and Protection Commission, and promoted public education on disaster awareness and crisis communication. Taiwan also started to build cyber defense capabilities in the late 2000s and launched information security training programs for government employees and schools. Efforts to strengthen societal resilience expanded in the early 2010s to include infrastructure protection, information security, and civic mobilization. Under President Tsai Ing-wen, legislation was passed in 2021 to establish the All-Out Defense Mobilization Agency under the Ministry of National Defense, which was tasked with bolstering civil defense as well as strengthening reserve forces, planning and managing mobilization, and coordinating across ministries as well as central and local governments.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 gave new impetus to Taiwan's societal resilience

initiatives, especially preparation for a potential attack from China,¹ although public framing emphasized disaster readiness. To strengthen civil defense awareness and educate citizens on emergency procedures, the government issued the first civil defense handbook for citizens in April 2022. Tsai's

Figure 1: Civil Defense Handbook



Source: Bonnie Glaser

Taiwan's Push for Societal Resilience



administration also increased defense spending, expanded compulsory military training from four months to one year, pledged NT \$564.5 billion over ten years to harden and decentralize the power grid, and started investing in low-orbit satellites to maintain communications if undersea internet cables are severed. Measures were taken to enhance information resilience by countering disinformation campaigns through public education and cooperation with tech companies. Taiwan's stockpiles of emergency supplies received greater attention based on audits of necessities for daily life and emergency supplies, including combat medication. During Tsai's tenure civil society organizations dedicated to enhancing resilience flourished, providing community-based first aid, training to identify propaganda and other forms of cognitive warfare, and information about practical steps for emergency preparedness.

After assuming the presidency in May 2024, Lai Ching-te introduced even greater urgency into Taiwan's societal resilience efforts. One month after his inauguration, Lai launched the Whole-of-Society Defense Resilience (WOSDR) Committee, a national-level group under the President's Office that includes representatives from government, industry, academia, and civil society focused on fortifying Taiwan's democratic society against potential disruptions. The Committee meets quarterly and is convened by the president. Its work concentrates on five critical areas:

energy and critical infrastructure resilience; social services, medical care, and shelters; protection of transportation, communication and financial networks; strategic material and supply chain preparedness; and civilian training and mobilization.

Lai's government is testing Taiwan's readiness by holding tabletop exercises and on-site drills. In 2025, the Ministry of Interior's two longstanding civilian drills—the emergency air-raid drill Wan An and disaster-response Min An—were combined into an Urban Resilience Exercise that was held alongside the military's annual Han Kuang exercises with the aim of better integrating disaster prevention, civil defense, and national defense. More resources are also being devoted to resilience: In October 2025 the legislature passed a special budget that included about NT\$150 billion for resilience work.²

Lai's administration is taking steps to strengthen coordination on resilience work between central and local governments, between the public and private sector, and between government and civil society. For example, PX Mart, the largest supermarket chain in Taiwan with over 1,000 stores, participated in emergency air-raid drills. Urban Resilience Exercises were staged multiple times across the island, to engage with 11 county and city governments. Volunteer civil society organizations also joined Taiwan's recent resilience exercises. At the township

level, district offices are preparing to play the role of disaster prevention and coordination centers that civilians can turn to in an emergency. The government has designated 5,953 sites as rationing stations that would distribute food, water, oil, and salt during a crisis, and have identified 4,520 temporary shelters that could cover 12.76% of the population during a disaster or conflict.³

In his public speeches, Lai has been more transparent and franker with the public than his predecessors about the threats that Taiwan faces from China and has underscored the need for greater resilience efforts. His statements and policies convey his firm belief that resilience is not only military, but also societal. For example, on March 13, 2025, President Lai described five major national security threats that Taiwan faces: China's threat to national sovereignty, its threats from infiltration and espionage activities targeting Taiwan's military, its threats aimed at obscuring the national identity of the people of Taiwan, its threats from united front infiltration into Taiwanese society through cross-strait exchanges, and its threats involving using "integrated development" to attract Taiwan's businesspeople and youth. He introduced 17 major strategies to respond to these threats, which included a call to Taiwan's citizens to "build up whole-of-society resilience" and counter united front operations. "Every citizen stands on the frontline of the defense of democracy and freedom", Lai stated.⁴

According to Deputy National Security Adviser Lin Fei-fan, the WOSDR is a "comprehensive strategy that combines military preparedness with democratic cohesion, infrastructure hardening, and societal strength." Its objective is to strengthen "both Taiwan's capacity and confidence to resist, counter, and prevail" against Beijing's efforts to use gray-zone pressure to compel surrender or take Taiwan by force.⁵ Others describe Taiwan's objective as maintaining the

"continuous operation of society" during a Chinese blockade or war; some ministries say they seek to maintain six months of continuous operations, citing the timeframe as an interim goal that will evolve alongside changing circumstances and resource availability.⁶ The WOSDR is in its early stages with much more work to be done. Importantly, Taipei views societal resilience as a continuous process of adaptation, not a final, static end-state.

Although Taiwan's security has been the focus of many studies, tabletop exercises, and wargames in recent years, there has been comparatively little research aimed at understanding and evaluating Taiwan's recent efforts to bolster societal resilience.⁷ Recognizing that the WOSDR is a complex project with numerous lines of effort, in this study we attempt to investigate and assess Taiwan's progress in three areas that we consider to be crucial to the success of the WOSDR plan: energy, medical, and digital communications resilience. Our research questions are: within these three lines of effort, what are Taiwan's goals, what has been achieved so far, what challenges have been encountered, and what more should Taiwan do? Our conclusion provides recommendations for Taiwan as well as for like-minded countries who seek to assist Taiwan's societal resilience efforts.

Our findings are drawn from over two dozen interviews with central government officials (from the National Security Council, Executive Yuan, ministries of defense, health and welfare, economic affairs, digital affairs, and internal affairs), local government officials (from Taichung and New Taipei City), telecommunication and energy company representatives, and members of the WOSDR Committee.

Energy Resilience

The Problem Set

In 2024, 95.77% of Taiwan’s energy supply was imported (see Table 1).⁸ Taiwan’s dependence on energy imports leaves the island highly vulnerable to shortages during a crisis or war. In the event of a Chinese amphibious assault—a scenario that remains unlikely in the near term—the People’s Liberation Army would engage in a “joint blockade campaign”, cutting the island off from critical supplies to significantly limit the ability of Taiwan’s government, military, and people to fight back.⁹

Even during peacetime, Beijing may choose to disrupt the flow of energy into Taiwan through a quarantine in which Chinese coast guard vessels turn around LNG tankers trying to enter Taiwan’s ports

or the PLA stages a prolonged military exercise that effectively blocks commercial cargo from reaching the island.¹⁰ By doing so, Beijing could achieve multiple objectives—assert sovereign control, hinder the normal functioning of Taiwan’s economy, and effectively deepen divisions in society and erode the confidence of Taiwan’s people in the ability of their own government and the United States to defend the island. Beijing could also interfere with Taiwan’s energy imports without resorting to a quarantine or blockade. As one observer said, “Beijing does not need to fire any shots” to disrupt LNG flows. “They could offer to buy up our cargo from common suppliers.”¹¹

Table 1: Types and Sources of Imported Energy

Imported Energy Type	% Imported	Top Sources
Crude Oil	99.7%	Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, US
LNG	99.95%	Australia, Qatar, US
Coal	100%	Australia, Indonesia, Russia

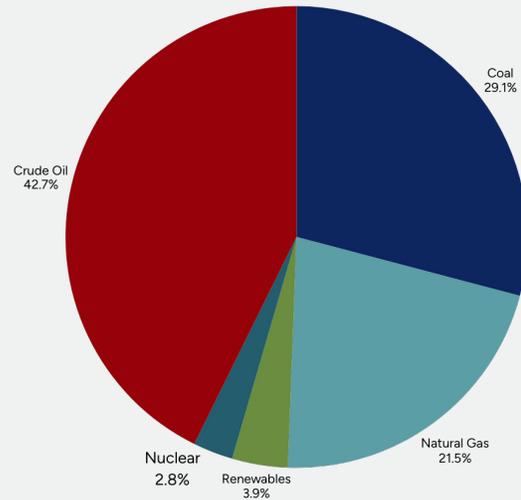
Source: Taiwan 2024 Energy Statistics Handbook, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy Administration

Taiwan’s energy supply is heavy on crude oil, coal, and LNG (see Figure 2). Most of its electricity is generated from LNG and coal (see Figure 3). Taiwan seeks to have (domestically produced) renewable energy generate 60–70% of electricity by 2050, which would tick both national security and environmental boxes.¹² However, the government has continuously fallen short of reaching its targets. Renewable sources generated only 11.7% of electricity in 2024, well short of the 20% goal set for 2025. As part of its energy transition, Taiwan is also reducing its reliance on coal; for the first time in 2024, the proportion of LNG-generated electricity exceeded that of coal-fired power.¹³

If Taiwan cannot rely on a predictable flow of energy imports, it will have to turn to its reserves. Domestic legislation mandates minimum stockpiles—30 days of coal, 90 days of crude oil, and 11 days of liquefied natural gas (LNG); in 2027, mandated LNG reserves will increase to 14 days. The actual number of days of reserves is classified but appears to exceed the minimum requirement. Various sources suggest that Taiwan stockpiles approximately 146 days of oil, 40 to 42 days of coal, and 12 to 14 days of gas.¹⁴ Part of the reason for Taiwan’s limited LNG stockpiles is its low terminal and storage capacity. Taiwan has two LNG receiving terminals in operation, one in Kaohsiung to the south, and one in Taichung on the west coast. In 2024 Taiwan had the highest LNG regasification plant utilization rate (132%) in the world, one indication that its system is overstretched.¹⁵

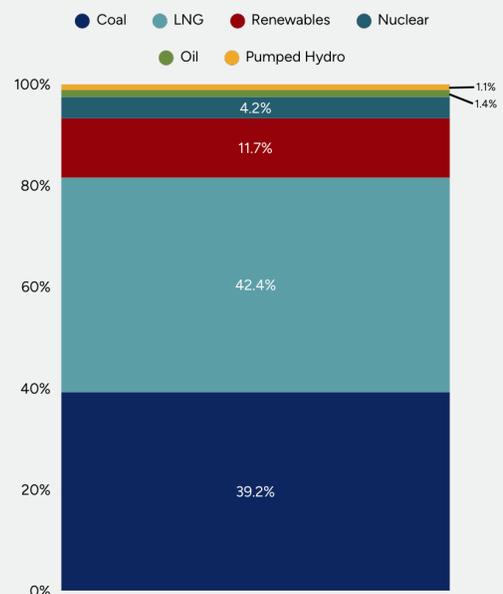
How long Taiwan’s energy stockpiles last will depend on how the government chooses to ration electricity consumption among civilian, government, military, and industrial use. Taiwan’s manufacturing-heavy tech industry is electricity intensive; serious power restrictions on industry will come at a large economic and potentially political cost.

Figure 2: Energy Supply by Type, 2024



Source: Taiwan 2024 Energy Statistics Handbook, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy Administration

Figure 3: Energy Mix in 2024



Source: Taiwan 2024 Energy Statistics Handbook, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy Administration

Resupplying will also be difficult for Taiwan. As the island's only security guarantor, the United States is the only government that is likely to directly intervene to defend Taiwan if China invades. It is unclear whether a temporary Chinese energy quarantine would meet the threshold for US action. Most commercial shippers are likely to divert Taiwan-bound cargo during a quarantine involving heavy Chinese maritime presence and the promise of economic punishment by Beijing. The United States and Taiwan have limited LNG tankers and vessels that they can control at their disposal to break a quarantine or blockade. There is currently only one US-flagged LNG global carrier in the world; Taiwan relies on foreign-flagged vessels for its energy imports.¹⁶

Taiwan's energy infrastructure will be a key target during a conflict. Almost 44% of Taiwan's power cables are underground, a higher percentage than that of Japan (6%) and South Korea (20.5%) but still leaving half of its system exposed.¹⁷ Moreover, Taiwan's highly centralized power grid is prone to system failure even during peacetime. Power runs along three transmission lines from south to north and through three key nodes.¹⁸ Disruptions to individual nodes—whether from natural disasters or human sabotage—can impact the whole grid, resulting in widespread blackouts. In 2022, a malfunction at a power plant in the south led to the shutting down of a third of the grid's capacity, leaving 5 million households without electricity and creating an economic impact of more than NT\$ 5 billion.¹⁹

Progress

Taiwan's government is studying the impact of mass energy disruptions and is engaging with local governments and civilian agencies about these vulnerabilities. In December 2024 the WODSR

Committee ran their first tabletop exercise around a scenario in which Chinese authorities use the justification of a military exercise to require ships entering Taiwan's ports to report to China and comply with inspections, resulting in delays in the arrival of oil tankers and LNG vessels. Sabotage at an electrical substation also leads to local power outages. Participants in the exercise included deputy-level ministers from the central government and the local Tainan government.²⁰ During the 2025 Urban Resilience Exercises, the Lai administration asked local governments to simulate their response to attacks on energy infrastructure.²¹ In Taichung, some of the exercises revolved around missile strikes on the city's LNG facilities.²²

Taiwan is adapting its peacetime electricity rationing plan for blockade and wartime contingencies, but it has not resolved key implementation challenges. In the event of a blockade, experts believe that Taiwan will largely rely on coal and renewables for power and has reserves that can last for at least 40 days.²³ Gas reserves may be diverted to food production or other critical industries and the military may consume most of the crude oil stockpile.²⁴ Taipei has long had an electricity rationing plan that imposes incremental curbs to consumption once the power grid reserve margin falls below certain thresholds in the event of system failures or natural disasters.²⁵

In a blockade, more significant restrictions, such as the shutting down of large parts of industry, will be part of Taipei's plan.²⁶ Drastic cuts to electricity consumption could enable Taiwan to keep the lights on for longer. According to Taipower Chairman Tseng Wen-sheng, the electricity usage of civilians and government represent only one-third of total consumption; two-thirds of electricity is used by industry.²⁷ By this accounting, if Taiwan immediately shuts down all industry following a Chinese blockade, it could maintain power for up to 120 days, or three

times an estimated 40 days of reserves if no power rationing is imposed. The target for Taipei is to maintain the “continuous operation of society” for six months.²⁸ However, other calculations suggest that the industrial sector accounts for just over 55% of electricity consumption (see Figure 4).²⁹

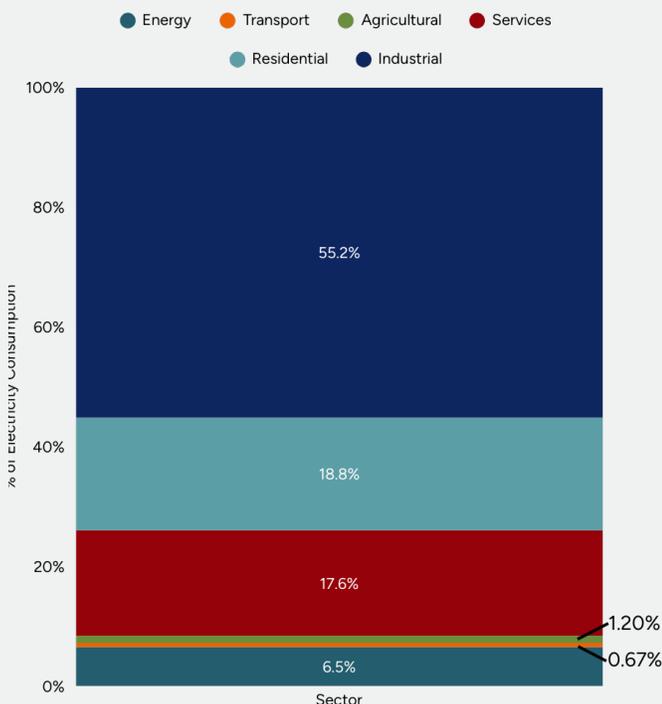
According to the Energy Administration, Taiwan will prioritize the needs of residential users, essential industries, and government agencies during emergency situations.³⁰ Observers believe the government’s rationing plan has identified priority

sectors necessary for the basic functioning of society (including, for example, government, military, transportation, hospitals) and will adopt a graduated approach in curbs to consumption.³¹ It is not clear whether rationing of civilian consumption—limiting electricity to parts of the day—is factored into the government’s plan.

A key dilemma for the government is the decision-making around when to start executing electricity cuts and the thresholds at which curbs should further tighten or loosen. Officials say the “timing of implementation” of its emergency plans is particularly challenging.³² If Taipei imposes substantial limits too early, bringing its entire semiconductor and manufacturing industries to a grinding halt, “it will be suicidal” economically and politically.³³ And if Taipei insufficiently restricts electricity consumption early on, it risks running out of reserves too quickly. In a full-scale amphibious assault, decision-making will be easier, as Taipei will understand that it is gearing up for a protracted, costly conflict that will result in a full stoppage of trade anyway. In a quarantine, however, Beijing may maintain ambiguity over the duration of its measures and the extent of escalation, with a view to complicating Taipei’s decision-making. Overreaction to a limited Chinese quarantine could be politically costly for Taipei, eroding societal and international confidence.

Effective implementation will also depend on having the authorizations in place for the president to enact prolonged electricity cuts. Regulations for temporary energy restriction and allocation measures exist for when energy supply becomes insufficient.³⁴ However, these measures authorize restrictions of up to 15% of industrial use and do not explicitly account for circumstances of war or the possibility that authorities may need to enact controls well before power supplies begin to dwindle.³⁵ Efforts by Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs in 2020 to

Figure 4: Percentage of Electricity Consumption by Sector, 2024



Source: Taiwan 2024 Energy Statistics Handbook, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy Administration

include “political and economic factors” as possible circumstances for power rationing led to push back from opposition politicians from the Kuomintang.³⁶ Taiwan’s president has the constitutional right to issue an emergency decree “and take all necessary measures to avert imminent danger affecting the security of the State or of the people or to cope with any serious financial or economic crisis.” However, the legislature must ratify the decree within ten days.³⁷ The polarized nature of Taiwan’s politics, and the likely lack of complete information surrounding Chinese intentions, means that decision-making may be delayed at a critical moment.

Coordination and information-sharing with those who will be most impacted by electricity cuts, including industry and broader society, will also be important. Observers say that while informal communications have taken place with parts of industry about the government’s rationing plan, a more formal mechanism would be valuable and help to ensure industrial actors are themselves preparing for emergency contingencies.³⁸

Efforts to increase Taiwan’s LNG storage and terminal capacity are moving forward, but there are limits to how much more LNG can be stockpiled.

In March 2025, Taiwan’s state-owned oil and gas company, CPC Corporation, completed construction of Taiwan’s third LNG terminal, the Guantang Terminal, including two new gas storage tanks.³⁹ Four other LNG terminals are either in the planning, construction, or testing phases: CPC’s Zhouji Terminal, Taipower’s Hsieh-ho and Taichung Terminals, and Formosa Plastic Corporation’s Mailiao Terminal.⁴⁰ Taiwan plans to increase its mandated LNG reserves from 11 to 14 days by 2027.

However, industry experts underscore that there is limited physical space for additional LNG terminals and storage facilities; terminals need to be situated on

the coast to receive shipments.⁴¹ Moreover, storage of LNG is technically more complex and investment-intensive compared to other fuels. LNG requires cryogenic storage—it must be kept at extremely low temperatures—and is highly flammable when vaporized. Its safe storage requires specialized materials and complex insulation and monitoring systems.⁴² Even with proper storage the liquid gas incrementally evaporates—“boils off”—over time.

The development of new terminals also faces consistently sharp opposition from environmental groups and affected residents, often resulting in the scaling back and delay of projects.⁴³ Environmental impact assessments can take years to complete. Under the Lai administration, the process is “moving faster.”⁴⁴ In the past year, two LNG terminals moved forward in their impact assessment processes (Zhouji Terminal passed its assessment in September 2024; Hsieh-ho Terminal passed its assessment in February 2025—seven years after a preliminary hearing in 2018). But even after passing the environmental impact stage, projects can still be delayed because of local pushback.⁴⁵ Industry specialists say that more state support is needed to manage opposition to projects.⁴⁶

Because the approval for Hsieh-ho Terminal has dragged out, Taipower is turning to floating storage regasification units to supply LNG so that gas-powered units at Hsieh-ho can come online by 2031.⁴⁷ Floating Storage Regasification Units (FSRUs) are mobile gas terminals that are faster and cheaper to build than land-based facilities and can be deployed quickly in a crisis.⁴⁸ As part of its push to diversify away from Russian gas following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, for instance, Germany was able to install a first FSRU by December 2022.⁴⁹ Efforts to develop a Taiwan LNG carrier have also begun. In January 2025, Taiwan shipping company U-Ming announced a joint venture with Japanese

company K Line to build a 174,000-cubic-meter LNG carrier scheduled for delivery in 2026.⁵⁰

Taipei is expanding its coal reserves, recognizing that coal would be important in emergencies, but the image of continued reliance faces some domestic opposition. Taiwan has had a longstanding policy of reactivating decommissioned coal-fired units if the grid reserve margin falls below 6-8%, capping annual usage at 720 hours.⁵¹ The idea that coal reserves can play an important role in a national security emergency has been in circulation since at least 2021 and has been repeated publicly by Taipower and government officials.⁵² In 2023, Taipower began to look for sites to expand coal reserves (to 50 days) because of the potential threat of a Chinese blockade.⁵³ In 2025, two new indoor coal storage facilities in the Taichung power plant came online.⁵⁴ The units have a maximum stockpile capacity of 1.15 million tons of coal during emergencies, equivalent to more than 15 days' worth of coal consumption.⁵⁵ Coal is easier to store than LNG since it lasts longer, has fewer technical requirements, and needs little infrastructure—for instance, open-air stockpiles are a common form of coal storage.⁵⁶

However, domestic political discourse frames the reduction of coal use as an imperative for Taiwan for both environmental and public health reasons. Local resistance to coal-generated air pollution can make it difficult for the government and Taipower to make the case for maintaining coal infrastructure as emergency backup.⁵⁷ The salience of the issue makes it useful fodder for opposition politicians. Even though Taipower has pledged to make the Taichung power plant coal-free by the end of 2034, opposition lawmakers passed a non-binding resolution calling for a shorter timeframe of 2028.⁵⁸ Taipower plans to maintain six out of ten coal units in the Taichung power plant as backup units and dismantle the other four, but faces pressure to dismantle more; Taipower

has committed to reviewing whether it should dismantle additional units in 2032.⁵⁹

Taiwan has limited its options by shutting down its last nuclear reactor but is showing signs of reversal. In 2025 Taiwan shut down its last nuclear reactor at the Maanshan plant after decades of pursuing a policy of phasing out nuclear energy. Creating a “nuclear-free homeland” has been a plank of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) platform since the late 1980s, fueled by popular fears over safety issues and potential leakages from the storage of nuclear waste.

Public sentiment may be shifting, however. A 2024 poll showed that over 70% of respondents supported nuclear energy because of concerns about power outages.⁶⁰ The government has also taken steps to retain the option of restarting nuclear plants. Washington has encouraged Taipei to move in this direction, but government officials also recognize that Taiwan will need to generate more power than it currently does to support the expansion of semiconductor fabrication and data center operations and its goal of becoming a major AI hub. President Lai himself has maintained an open attitude, citing safety, proper management of nuclear waste, and societal consensus as preconditions for using nuclear energy.⁶¹ In May 2025 Taiwan's legislature created the legal foundation for restarting nuclear power plants through an amendment that allows nuclear plants to renew or extend their licenses for up to 20 years after license expiration.⁶² In that same month Taiwan's National Atomic Research Institute announced investments in research on small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs).⁶³ In December 2025 the government said it may restart facilities at Maanshan if it passes a safety review.⁶⁴

Restarting nuclear energy would give Taiwan's overburdened system more maneuvering room and check environmental and energy security boxes. But

it is an option with its own set of issues. For one, identifying sites for nuclear waste storage will remain a major challenge for both conventional reactors and SMRs. Restarting nuclear operations at the No. 2 reactor at the Maanshan nuclear power plant in Pingtung would take time, with the government suggesting a timeframe of 2028.⁶⁵ Nuclear power systems will also be vulnerable to Chinese attacks. Because nuclear systems are highly centralized and use only a few transmission lines, they are relatively easy to disrupt.⁶⁶

Infrastructure hardening efforts are underway, with a focus on protecting energy facilities and grid decentralization. The Lai administration has prioritized the protection of critical infrastructure—including energy facilities—and has verified defense plans for 35 critical infrastructure facilities, including through exercises.⁶⁷ The Second Special Police Corps (under the Ministry of the Interior), the military, and local police are tasked to work together to secure critical infrastructure facilities and to include the countering of drone attacks as part of their defense plans.⁶⁸ Local government actors, charged with implementation, have expressed concerns over the limited manpower available to patrol the large areas of land around the LNG facilities in Taichung and the lack of equipment to properly counter drones.⁶⁹ A special budget proposed by the Executive Yuan included NT\$2.15 billion for drones, drone jamming equipment, reconnaissance, and electronic fencing; it passed in October 2025.⁷⁰ Local observers also highlighted the importance of restricting the purchase of land around critical infrastructure, pointing to such laws in the United States.⁷¹

In 2022, Taipower initiated the Grid Resilience Strengthening Construction Plan, a NT\$564.5 billion plan to decentralize the grid over ten years. The ambitious project seeks to alleviate the stress on Taiwan's three main transmission lines by providing

power directly to science and industrial parks, increasing the integration of wind and solar power through the construction of additional stations and transmission lines, and reducing power supply bottlenecks by constructing 28 new substations.⁷² In August 2024, President Lai called on Taipower to complete priority projects within the plan four years ahead of time, by 2028.⁷³ It is unclear whether this is achievable. In response, Taipower's Chairman Tseng said that priority projects have been identified but that the speed of implementation would depend on the company's ability to secure local permits.⁷⁴ In September, opposition lawmakers rejected allocating an additional NT\$20 billion to Taipower for the grid project.⁷⁵ By the end of 2025 Taipower had completed 37 subprojects and 115 individual projects, representing 34.74% of planned work.⁷⁶ Increased central–local government and ruling–opposition party coordination may be required to accelerate implementation.

Taiwan could consider the following recommendations:

- **Invest in a public messaging campaign**
 - Given the challenges that opposition and local politics pose to accelerating Taiwan's efforts to strengthen energy resilience, a public messaging campaign can help communicate why efforts to reduce Taiwan's import dependence and to diversify its energy sources are key to emergency situations such as a war or blockade but also—critically—to Taiwan maintaining its dominant position in advanced tech manufacturing supply chains.

- **Stress test its power rationing plan**
 - The government, along with Taipower, should engage in regular tabletop exercises that validate the effectiveness of its power rationing plan and the feasibility of implementation. These exercises should simulate different gray-zone scenarios, ranging from a quarantine to a full-scale invasion. The exercises should identify specific thresholds at which significant energy rationing will be imposed on industry. They should involve local governments, industry, and representatives from key non-energy sectors (medical, telecommunications, transportation, finance) to ensure that all stakeholders understand the rationing plan and the impact to their operations. The involvement of these sectors can help to identify implementation gaps and vulnerabilities.
 - Legal authorities should be in place for the president to make a timely decision to initiate the rationing plan.
- **Develop more coal and LNG reserves**
 - The government should increase its coal reserves, identify additional coal storage sites, and ensure that coal-fired backup units are maintained.
 - It should continue to build additional LNG facilities and invest in FSRUs as more permanent facilities.
- **Diversify its energy mix**
 - Steps should be taken to catch up to Taiwan's energy transition goals and ensure renewable energy can generate 20% of power by 2027. This will help to ease Taiwan's dependence on imported energy.
 - The government should accelerate plans to restart the No. 2 reactor at the Maanshan Nuclear Power Plant in Pingtung following necessary safety inspections and system tests. Conducting a referendum may help to create the political basis for an accelerated plan.

Medical Resilience

Problem Set

Taiwan has a robust healthcare system by global standards (see Table 2). Its digitized national health insurance program ensures comprehensive, affordable and convenient coverage for its citizens. For the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic the government was able to keep infection and fatality rates low without imposing a full lockdown.

Table 2: Comparing Taiwan’s Healthcare System

	<i>Health expenditures as % of GDP⁷⁷</i>	<i>Health expenditures per capita (USD)</i>	<i>Hospital beds per 1000</i>	<i>Physicians per 1000</i>	<i>Nurses and midwives per 1000</i>	<i>Specialist surgical workforce per 1000</i>
Taiwan	7.77	2,352	7.33	2.30	8.22 ⁷⁸	0.59
East Asia and Pacific	6.61	837.62	4.72	2.06	4.22	0.36
High-income countries	12.55	5,767.17	6.26	3.59	9.82	0.70
Israel	7.34	4,223.87	3.06	3.71	5.86	0.76
Ukraine (pre-invasion)	8.20	369.90	-	2.99	6.66	0.87

Compiled from the latest available data from the World Bank Group and Taiwan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Taiwan's system has shown resilience during past incidents involving mass casualties. In 2015, after an explosion at an amusement park in New Taipei City led to 500 burn victims, 144 ambulances were dispatched to send wounded to over 50 hospitals across the island.⁷⁹ In the event of Chinese missile strikes or a full amphibious assault, however, Taiwan's robust medical system would come under tremendous stress. Chinese attacks on hospitals and the roads to reach them cannot be ruled out. The scale of wounded during a conflict would be unprecedented. One simulation estimates that Taiwan military casualties alone could range from 3,500 to 85,000.⁸⁰

Taiwan's medical system is often overtaxed in peacetime—emergency room overcrowding, nursing and blood shortages are recurrent issues.⁸¹ In February 2025 Taiwan's blood supply dropped to 4.1 days, considered low by the standards of the Taiwan Blood Services Foundation, even though the island donates more blood than most of the world.⁸² Some of the existing stresses may be a result of the high utilization of Taiwan's hospitals for non-emergency reasons, driven in part by the affordability of healthcare. Taiwan's annual outpatient hospital visit rate per person was 15.4 in 2022, more than double the OECD average of six visits per capita.⁸³ Taiwan has medical centers with advanced (54) and intermediate (76) emergency trauma care capabilities. Every county and city on the island has at least one medical center with advanced trauma care capabilities.⁸⁴ But because Taiwan has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, its medical system has relatively little experience dealing with complex trauma wounds. Only a fraction of Taiwan's surgeons specialize in trauma care and regional hospitals have limited experience because severe trauma cases tend to be transferred to bigger hospitals.⁸⁵

Unlike Ukraine, Taiwan cannot depend on the flow of medical provisions from overland routes

crossing the territories of friendly neighbors.⁸⁶ If a humanitarian corridor is not established it will have to rely on existing stockpiles of medicine and medical equipment on the island. There are existing vulnerabilities in Taiwan's medical supply chain. Taiwan imports about 85% of the raw ingredients that are needed to produce drugs.⁸⁷ In 2023, 45.7% of imported active pharmaceutical ingredients came from China (NT\$ 3 billion out of a total NT\$ 6.6 billion imports); one official estimates that the number decreased to about 30% in 2024.⁸⁸ Short of a blockade, Beijing could use its leverage over foreign companies and governments to obstruct the flow of goods. During the pandemic, Taiwan's authorities alleged that Beijing's interference prevented Taiwan from securing BioNTech vaccines.⁸⁹

Progress

The Lai administration has made medical resilience a key focus of its efforts. Many of the lines of effort fall under the National Resilience Healthcare Preparedness Program, a four-year plan launched in 2024, led by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) and co-organized by the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Interior.

The government is establishing 500 emergency medical stations that are intended to provide dispersed basic medical care across society and to back up hospitals in a conflict. The government has identified sites, developed guidelines for the types of equipment and facilities each center should have and a set of standard operating procedures (such as how to triage and make transfers to hospitals), and supplied generators, radios, and emergency medical equipment.⁹⁰ There are also ongoing discussions to develop different tiers of emergency medical stations whereby the most basic ones operate as first aid

stations while the most advanced stations can accept reverse transfers of patients whose conditions have stabilized from hospitals or the frontlines.⁹¹ Most of the sites are local public health centers that usually offer vaccinations and basic check-ups; their facilities are of varying quality. The government intends for primary doctors from local, neighboring clinics to staff these centers in an emergency, but interest appears limited so far.⁹²

Twenty-four military units that would provide medical treatment on the battlefield have been set up. Civilian backup units are the next step. The government has devoted additional funding and training to expand and upgrade existing Forward Resuscitative and Surgical Detachments (FRSD), military medical teams comprised of physicians, nurses, surgeons and administrative staff that operate on the frontlines to improve the survival rate of those wounded on the battlefield.⁹³ The government seeks to complement the FRSDs by establishing 50 civilian teams under a Backup Operating Room Project (BORP) in 2026.⁹⁴ The BORP teams are expected to provide treatment to patients at local emergency medical stations who cannot be immediately evacuated before transferring them to a medical facility. They will be composed of voluntary civilian surgeons that undergo specialized training for operating in a conflict or disaster.

The government is promoting medical resilience training across society, but increasing uptake among medical personnel should be prioritized. The trainings broadly seek to fulfill three objectives: 1) enhance the skills of surgeons so that they can operate effectively during emergencies and participate in the BORP; 2) help doctors and staff in hospitals, firefighters, alternative reservists, and local primary doctors and pharmacists develop basic trauma and wound care skills; and 3) help the general public develop basic first aid capabilities.⁹⁵ According to the WOSDR

Committee, by the end of 2025, 400 surgeons had received training, 11,653 active duty soldiers and 9,615 reservists had received EMT-1 certification, and 50,000 members of the public had participated in first aid training. Moreover, 94,102 members of the public have received disaster relief training certification—beyond first aid skills, the training also includes evacuation route planning and community coordination during disaster response.⁹⁶

A key challenge is that medical personnel are not sufficiently incentivized to take the training courses—participation is voluntary. Many do not want to make time for a course that is irrelevant to their immediate work and some fear that participation will result in more responsibility during an emergency.⁹⁷ Uneven threat perceptions among the public—including among medical personnel—is also an obstacle. Many people in Taiwan believe either that a war with China is impossible or that the only recourse during a Chinese invasion is submission. Both perspectives lead to the logic that mobilization efforts are provocative or useless.

Efforts to ensure hospitals can operate in a conflict have started. One of the lines of effort is to create underground spaces where medical care can be reliably provided in the event of a hospital coming under attack. Hospitals have started running drills for underground operations and new hospitals are being built with expanded facilities below ground.⁹⁸ A new hospital in Pingtung which will be completed in 2028 will have three underground floors.⁹⁹ But observers underscore the need to significantly upgrade existing underground spaces (largely parking lots), and appropriate the budget to do so, before they can become operational in an emergency.¹⁰⁰ Hospitals will have to ensure that water, electricity, and oxygen lines are available underground and parking lot entrances are large enough for ambulances to enter, for example.¹⁰¹

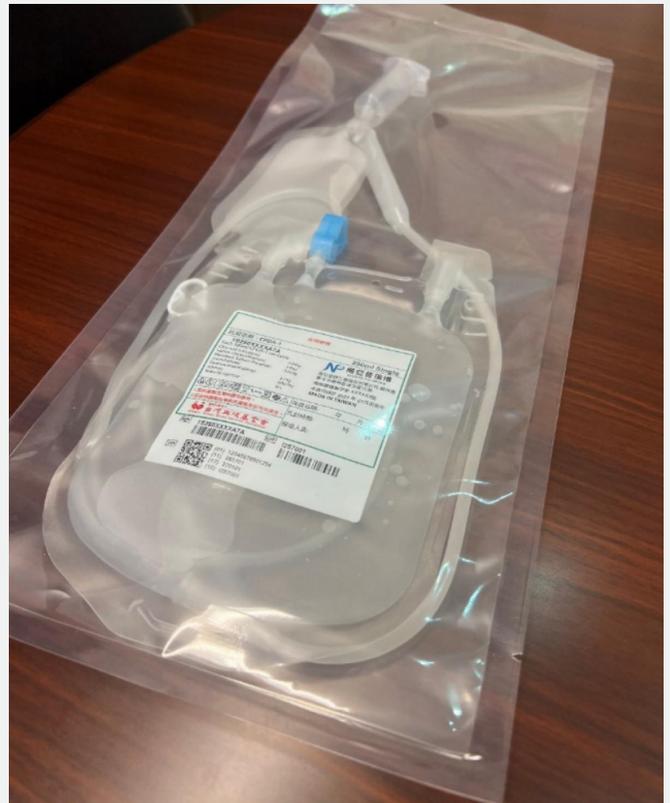
Taiwan's hospitals are required to maintain 72 hours of self-sufficiency, including for medical materials, drugs, and energy.¹⁰² Though the self-sufficiency requirement is not mandated by law, it is enforced through regular government evaluations.¹⁰³ Fifty-one hospitals that have been designated as capable of handling severe emergency cases have undergone an inventory check for sufficient stockpiles of gas, water, and electricity and received support from the government to have in place the necessary stockpiles.¹⁰⁴ There are ongoing discussions over whether hospitals should be required to develop a week's worth of self-sufficiency.¹⁰⁵

Taiwan is improving its blood supply resilience by establishing a blood donation system for the military that will be operational in 2026.¹⁰⁶ The Tri-Service Blood Program sets up blood banks at military hospitals across Taiwan and a centralized system for managing blood supply. The first military blood donation center is expected to begin operations at Songshan Military Hospital in 2026.¹⁰⁷ However, the civilian blood donation system—overseen by the Taiwan Blood Services Foundation—lacks a platform that monitors where blood has been allocated and how much each hospital has.¹⁰⁸

The government is starting to stockpile and domestically produce the medical equipment and medicine that Taiwan needs. Taiwan started producing blood bags domestically after officials identified the supply as overly reliant on imports, including from China (see Figure 5).¹⁰⁹ In June 2025, a subsidiary of Formosa Plastics Group built the first blood bag factory.¹¹⁰ The government is also looking into boosting domestic manufacturing of essential drugs. Low drug prices in Taiwan and the small size of the domestic market are key challenges, suggesting greater government intervention and financial support are needed to incentivize more domestic manufacturing.¹¹¹ In December 2025, Taiwan's cabinet took a first step, approving an initiative that would

provide NT\$24 billion to subsidize local production of 50 drugs between 2026 and 2029.¹¹²

Figure 5: Blood Bag Made in Taiwan



Credit: Amanda Hsiao

The government maintains a “strategic reserve” list of 25 essential drugs and 70 types of medical equipment deemed critical for wartime readiness that public and private hospitals are required to stockpile, according to regulations under the Preparation for National Defense Mobilization Law. Officials say that nationwide stockpiles are currently sufficient for treating over 10,000 individuals.¹¹³ Nearly 600 “essential drugs” have also been identified as important for high quality and comprehensive care in peacetime under the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act; they range from drugs for common infections to

treatments for cancer and chronic diseases.¹¹⁴ Industry experts say the multitude of lists creates ambiguity over priorities.¹¹⁵

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the government allocated funds to public hospitals to purchase 100,000 casualty kits for hospitals use but these are expiring; the government has told hospitals to extend their supplies.¹¹⁶ In April 2025, the government began to ask manufacturers with foreign drug licenses to increase their reserves to three months' worth of drugs and six months' worth of raw materials, in response to US plans to impose pharmaceutical tariffs.¹¹⁷ In June 2025 Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense reported completing the stockpiling of essential trauma medicines and medical supplies and signing contracts with 36 factories in 2025 to produce 86 types of wartime medicines and medical supplies to ensure that the military can meet wartime demands.¹¹⁸

Island-wide drills played an important education and coordination function but have been "too perfect".¹¹⁹

As part of the Urban Resilience drills that ran from March to July 2025, local governments and medical personnel ran through standard operating procedures for responding to mass casualty events. However, as an example, medical tents were set up in advance of the drills instead of having participants mobilize the materials themselves as they would have to do in a war.¹²⁰ Officials themselves say that the drills were a first step and that more realistic exercises will be staged next year.¹²¹ The drills have nevertheless played a useful public educational role, motivated local governments to review their response protocols, and strengthened coordination between local and central governments and relevant ministries.

Existing emergency medical response systems will need to be adapted for large-scale, sustained crises. A key reason that Taiwan's emergency medical

response has been effective in the past is the robust intervention of the central government.¹²² During normal operations there is no coordinating body that oversees the transfer of patients between hospitals. Instead, hospital staff call individual hospitals with available beds until they find one that is willing to accept a patient, a process that veteran emergency room doctors say is inefficient.¹²³ If there is a mass casualty event, the government activates response mechanisms either at the regional or central levels, depending on the severity of the circumstance.¹²⁴ In the aforementioned explosion incident in 2015, MOHW established a platform that monitored availability of hospital beds and personnel across Taiwan, matched them to hospital requests, and facilitated transfers.¹²⁵

Taiwan will need to ensure that it has an emergency medical response system that can handle the complexities of a conflict. Though the island has been effective in responding to isolated incidents and natural disasters during peacetime, a conflict will involve disruptions across multiple fronts (energy, communications, materials shortages, enemy fire, etc.) and multiple systems (military and civilian), presenting a more complex and prolonged coordination challenge. The efficient allocation of healthcare resources (hospital beds, blood, drugs, medical personnel, ambulances) to needs (patients with varying conditions) will be particularly important as Taiwan builds out its medical network, adding 500 emergency medical stations on top of the existing 204 hospitals with emergency departments, as well as mobile military (FRSD) and civilian (BORP) medical teams.

Taiwan could consider the following recommendations:

- **Upgrade and stress test its emergency medical response system for a conflict**
 - The government should validate the effectiveness of Taiwan's emergency medical response protocol through more realistic drills or tabletop exercises incorporating known elements of a blockade or a conflict—including power, communication, and transportation disruptions. Exercises should be staged at all government levels and within hospitals to test assumptions and identify gaps.
 - An effective system would enable central and local authorities to receive timely information on the distribution of resources and patient needs. It would also include a clear set of procedures and authorities for the allocation of resources and the transfer of patients.
- **Set concrete overall objectives that focus the multiple lines of effort**
 - The government should determine the number of trauma care patients that Taiwan's medical system should be able to handle under a state of emergency. For instance, the government could determine that Taiwan's medical system must be able to provide care for 100,000 trauma care patients in a situation in which imports are entirely cut off, power is rationed, and parts of the medical system are not functioning.
 - Annual targets for individual lines of effort (the number of operational emergency medical stations and underground hospitals, drug reserve levels, number of surgeons trained) could then be established to meet the overall objective.
- **Require resilience training for medical personnel**
 - Basic trauma and wound care training should be a requirement of medical personnel recertification. Mandatory trainings will not be popular; a public messaging campaign on why the trainings are important and how medical resilience efforts raises the quality of Taiwan's medical care system during peacetime may be valuable.
- **Establish a drug and medical materials resilience committee**
 - Relevant agencies (MOHW, Food and Drug Administration, National Health Insurance, and Ministry of Economic Affairs) as well as hospital and industry representatives should be included. The committee could review and streamline existing lists of critical drugs and materials, determine the reserve levels that would be necessary, and identify lines of efforts to put in place the stockpiles.

Digital Communications Resilience

Problem Set

Taiwan's ability to weather escalatory Chinese coercive pressure and kinetic military strikes will depend on whether it can maintain the capacity to communicate with the outside world and, within Taiwan itself, between the government, military, and citizens. Its ability to shape the narrative will be essential to how the international community perceives events and whether and how much support will be offered, just as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's ability to communicate with the world helped Kyiv rally international support for its defense against Russia.

The stakes are even higher for Taiwan, given the island's ambiguous international status and few diplomatic allies. Beijing will seek to portray its actions as justified and proportionate responses to provocations by Taiwan and cast the dispute as an internal issue to dissuade international intervention. Information-sharing and coordination between Taipei and Washington will be crucial for Taiwan's ability to mount an effective defense. Reliable communication channels will also be critical for the government to coordinate resilience and defense efforts at home and to maintain the confidence of the population and military in the government's efforts.

The island's external communications depend on 14 undersea international fiber optic cables that are susceptible to damage and disruption from natural conditions and human sabotage. Ten domestic cables provide internet connectivity to Taiwan's outlying islands. Together, these 24 cables provide over 100 terabytes per second of bandwidth. According to the National Security Bureau, submarines cables were severed 7 to 8 times on average per year in the past

three years because of natural deterioration and intentional damage, with 12 breakages in 2023.¹²⁶ In recent years, Chinese-registered or Chinese-crewed vessels have been involved in at least three incidents in which Taiwan's cables were cut or damaged, in February 2023, January 2025, and February 2025. The 2023 incident left nearly 14,000 residents across the Matsu islands without fully functioning internet for several weeks.¹²⁷

The most efficient way to cut off Taiwan's connection to the world would be to directly attack—through missile strikes or electromagnetic pulse—the five landing sites where the cables converge.¹²⁸ But in scenarios short of a conflict, synchronized cable-cutting by proxies create a layer of deniability for Beijing that will complicate the international community's decision-making over whether to respond.

Taiwan does not have domestic cable repair capabilities. It depends on two international consortia, in Yokohama and Southeast Asia, for the repair of its international cables. It identifies domestic cable repair companies through a public tender process. Repairs to Matsu Cable 2 in 2023 took four months and 23 days (repairs to Matsu Cable 3 were faster and took one month and 23 days).¹²⁹ Damage to one of Taiwan's international cables in January 2025 took 17 days before repairs were complete.¹³⁰ If there are multiple, simultaneous cable breakages in the region, Taiwan must wait for its turn. But even once a repair is scheduled, Beijing can continue to be disruptive. According to former deputy minister of the Ministry of Digital Affairs Chiueh Harming, one reason why repairs on Matsu Cable 2 took so long was interference by Chinese coast guard vessels.¹³¹

Taiwan's largest telecommunications provider, Chunghwa Telecom, has long relied on a Submarine Cable Automatic Warning System (SAWS) to detect unusual activities around its cables. When a ship with a length greater than 20 meters enters within a 1 km radius of a cable and slows to less than 5 knots, SAWS notifies the vessel to leave and not to anchor.¹³² If there is continued non-compliance, a coast guard vessel is dispatched to encourage the suspicious vessel to leave the no-anchor zone.

Taiwan's internal communications depend on an internal fiber optic cable network that has been fortified through the construction of a fiber optic "backbone" connecting cable landing sites in the north and south.¹³³ Because of this network, even if all of Taiwan's undersea cables are cut the island will still be able to communicate internally over platforms that have servers in Taiwan, including Google, Amazon, and Microsoft. However, the overland cable itself remains vulnerable to damage from natural disasters and human attack.

Progress

The 2023 Matsu incident focused minds in Taiwan on the need to strengthen its communications infrastructure resilience. Work began under the Tsai administration and has continued under Lai to build land-sea-air redundant communications networks while strengthening the protection of communications infrastructure.

Taiwan is investing in additional submarine cables and landing sites. Shortly after the Matsu incident, work began on a fourth cable between Taiwan and Matsu, with completion set for 2026.¹³⁴ In 2025, Chunghwa Telecom launched two new cables, the Southeast Asia-Japan Cable 2 (SJC2) and Apricot.

Chunghwa also announced investments in two additional cables, a trans-Pacific cable connecting Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and the United States called E2A (completion in second half of 2028), and an intra-Asia cable system called Aug East (completion in 2029).¹³⁵ The company has diversified routing (bypassing China as a landing site) and established dual landing points to enhance resilience.¹³⁶ In October 2025 Meta announced a new cable passing through Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore that would be completed by 2028.¹³⁷

New landing sites are in the works alongside new cables—Aug East's landing points will be in Yilan and Taitung on Taiwan's east coast, meaning the cables will circumvent the Taiwan Strait.¹³⁸

Taiwan has upgraded its microwave network, creating a credible backup communications pathway for its outlying islands. When Chunghwa Telecom resumed microwave communications for Matsu after its cables were cut in February 2023, the network was able to provide only a fraction (2.2 gigabytes per second [gbps]) of the bandwidth the population needed (8–9 gbps). Most of the bandwidth was reserved for government and military use as a result.¹³⁹ Continued upgrading over the months that followed saw quick improvements, with bandwidth reaching 4.4 gbps in May, 6.6 gbps in September, and 10.6 gbps in December 2023, exceeding Matsu's peak usage.¹⁴⁰ By February 2025, microwave communications could provide 12.6 gbps for Matsu and took only thirty minutes to switch over from the fiber optic cable system. Bandwidth for other outlying islands remains more limited.¹⁴¹ In 2025, Chunghwa Telecom added 29 new microwave stations, on top of an existing 100 stations, across Taiwan's mountainous areas.¹⁴²

The government has invested in satellite networks that have proven to be effective for natural disaster response but remain untested for Chinese

contingencies. Taiwan is investing in its own domestic satellite network which will take time to realize. In 2023, President Tsai committed NT\$40 billion to fund “low-orbit communication satellite research”; in 2024, Taiwan’s space agency announced its plans to launch six low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites by 2029 as part of a strategic effort to develop a domestic network of satellites.¹⁴³ According to the head of Taiwan’s space agency Wu Jong-shinn, Taiwan needs 150 LEO satellites for “basic communication resilience.”¹⁴⁴ In April 2025, Chunghwa Telecom inked a deal with Astranis to build Taiwan’s first sovereign, geostationary satellite; Taiwan would have total control of the satellite and full use of its bandwidth.¹⁴⁵

The government has also secured access to foreign satellite networks that have already proven effective in strengthening the island’s disaster response. In 2023 Chunghwa Telecom signed deals with foreign

satellite providers Eutelstat OneWeb for its LEO satellite network and SES for its medium Earth orbit (MEO) satellites. In July 2024, the government announced that 773 satellite reception locations could successfully receive signals from LEO and MEO satellites.¹⁴⁶ These terminals could receive LEO signals for about 40 minutes each hour, totaling a little over half a day, and MEO signals for 24 hours a day.

Taiwan’s LEO and MEO satellite capabilities were successfully tested and deployed in response to a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in April 2024. The earthquake hit Taiwan’s east coast, cutting visitors and residents off from electricity and internet and phone service. In response, the Ministry of Digital Affairs (MODA) deployed a prototype Emergency Responder Communication Vehicle (Figure 6) with receiving terminals for both LEO and MEO satellite signals and 4G and 5G capabilities.¹⁴⁷ The self-powered

Figure 6: Self-powered Emergency Responder Communication Vehicle



Credit: Ministry of Digital Affairs

vehicle arrived 12 hours after the earthquake struck and helped rescuers the next day receive drone-captured footage of the disaster zone through LEO satellite signals. Because the emergency vehicle could not reach areas where roads were obstructed, the government also delivered three LEO terminals by helicopter.

Nineteen government information systems were backed up in the cloud in 2025. Officials identified what they considered were the information systems most essential to maintaining basic government functions, including, for instance, Taiwan's health insurance, national ID, business registration, and tax systems.¹⁴⁸

In the event that all Taiwan's cables were cut, satellite networks could support limited external communications. According to industry experts, OneWeb satellites can provide 1.6 gbps per second of the 100 terabytes per second of undersea cables, or less than 1 percent of normal bandwidth. In such a scenario, external communications would have to be limited to the most essential of government communications. Former MODA officials say the OneWeb network would provide sufficient bandwidth for video messages from Taiwan's president to the world, communications with foreign governments, access to already backed-up government information systems, and international financial transactions.¹⁴⁹ However, it is unclear whether the government has a prioritization and operational plan in place in which essential communications are defined and catalogued according to their level of importance, their bandwidth requirement, and the backup networks they would rely on.¹⁵⁰

If Taiwan's overland fiber optic cable system or core network were knocked out, current satellite and microwave capabilities could not provide for nonessential domestic communications. Former

MODA officials say that the most essential internal government communications between the president and the military, central and local government, and critical disaster response units could continue.¹⁵¹ The government is piloting a program that would dedicate mobile network bandwidth to disaster relief units through the issuance of SIM cards.¹⁵² About 900 satellite phones have been distributed to the township level.¹⁵³ However, the assumption that all essential internal government communications can transition to and operate on LEO satellite networks remains untested. Bandwidth limitations may be more severe in the parts of Taipei where government offices are clustered, as they will compete for service from the same satellite terminals.¹⁵⁴ The lack of internet or mobile phone communications for the public will challenge societal resilience in a contingency.

The likelihood that Taiwan's internal network will be completely knocked out is low, according to some experts, even in a scenario of total conflict, because of the extensiveness of the fiber optic network and the degree of redundancy that has been built in.¹⁵⁵ In the event of a Chinese military occupation, a bigger risk may be the weaponization, rather than the destruction, of Taiwan's internal network. Chinese operatives could use Taiwan's network to conduct cyberattacks on critical infrastructure or spread misinformation, both of which would be useful for consolidating control over the population, government, and military.¹⁵⁶

The government has stepped up its work to deter cable sabotage. In January 2025, the government drew up a list of suspicious "shadow fleet" vessels that it would more closely monitor.¹⁵⁷ In 2023, Taiwan criminalized intentional damage to its cables, imposing a penalty of up to seven years in prison.¹⁵⁸ Additional amendments advanced in October 2025 would allow vessels that damage Taiwan's undersea cables and pipelines to be seized and require ships to keep their

automatic identification systems on when entering Taiwan's waters.¹⁵⁹ The government has also followed through on its promise of legal punishment. In June 2025, a Taiwan district court sentenced the captain of Hong Tai 58, a freighter registered in Togo that severed a cable linking the outlying island of Penghu to Taiwan, to three years in prison.¹⁶⁰

Enforcement challenges remain. Maritime traffic in the Taiwan Strait and the limited capacity of Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration means that even with improved monitoring, apprehension of perpetrators is difficult. According to the coast guard, as many as 100,000 ships pass through the 1-kilometer radius around Taiwan's cable warning zone every month, making it difficult for authorities to verify criminal acts.¹⁶¹ The enforcement process depends first on confirmation from telecommunication operators of cable damage.¹⁶² The proximity and availability of coast guard assets and weather conditions also factor into the timeliness of response. The jurisdiction of coastal states is limited to their territorial waters, meaning that a suspected vessel would have to (willingly or under compulsion) enter within 12 nautical miles from Taiwan's coastline before Taiwan's coast guard can legally board the ship and detain the crew.¹⁶³

The government has taken steps to improve coordination and response time. In early 2025, MODA established a single window system whereby telecoms operators could inform multiple agencies of transgressions, shortening the notification time from six to two hours. A cable security response platform was stood up in April 2025, bringing together Taiwan's coast guard, prosecutors, telecoms operators and investigators.¹⁶⁴ Chunghwa Telecom is also working on identifying newer technology that can enhance its ability to detect sabotage.¹⁶⁵

Defense plans for communications infrastructure are being drawn up as part of the government's push to protect critical infrastructure during a blockade or war. The government has tasked critical infrastructure facilities to develop plans and has run drills with local governments on protecting cable landing sites.¹⁶⁶ Initial steps are being taken to fend off drone and Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) attacks. In October, the legislature passed a special budget for counter-drone equipment. The government is also subsidizing telecommunications operators to develop measures to protect cable landing stations and satellite reception stations against EMP attacks.¹⁶⁷ The government has also significantly empowered MODA with the authority to enforce cybersecurity standards for both government agencies and non-government infrastructure operators.¹⁶⁸

Taiwan could consider the following recommendations:

- **Build more redundancies**
 - The inability of satellite backup networks to substitute for the bandwidth of undersea cables means that Taiwan should invest in more cables and make it easier for investors to build more cables. The application process could be simplified and the review time shortened, for instance by establishing a single window for applications.¹⁶⁹
 - Taiwan should continue to seek the service of other satellite network providers, such as Kuiper, to build out more satellite-backed redundancies.

- **Continue to strengthen infrastructure defense**

- Efforts to harden and build backup to cable landing sites should continue. Additional landing sites should be built alongside new cables. The government should review the defensive plans and measures adopted for cable landing sites to reduce the odds that all five landing sites would be paralyzed in a contingency.
- Chunghwa Telecom's Submarine Cable Automatic Warning System should be placed on all cables.

- **Develop and test a comprehensive response plan**

- Tabletop exercises should be conducted involving relevant agencies and experts to understand the potential level of damage to Taiwan's internal network in different contingencies and the implications for the island's connectivity. Developing a shared risk assessment will help generate more informed policy responses in a situation of limited resources and time.
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan accounting for all contingencies. The plan should identify which types of communications (a presidential address to the international community, internal government communications) will be prioritized under each scenario, the bandwidth required, and the primary, secondary, etc. networks that would be used.
- Develop a comprehensive communications infrastructure defense plan accounting for all contingencies, including an occupation

scenario. Responses could include the isolation of parts of the network that have been taken over by invading forces or rerouting network signals around nodes that are damaged.

- Have in place a robust energy rationing plan (see Energy section). Without power, none of the island's communication networks will function.

- **Prepare the public**

- Inform the public of potential communication disruptions to reduce widespread panic during an outage.
- Initiate a program to encourage the large-scale purchase and use of radios as backup.
- Continue efforts to educate the public about likely disinformation attempts and ways to access trusted sources of information.

Conclusion

Building on decades of natural disaster preparation, Taiwan has taken important steps under the Lai administration to strengthen its ability to withstand Chinese aggression. The leadership's efforts in the last year and a half have begun to forge a shared understanding of mission within government and a shared language with society. The Lai administration's directness in publicly discussing the threats that face the island—through exercises that posit a Chinese blockade and crisis response handbooks that explicitly reference Chinese military aggression—is a step change in Taiwan's response and has helped normalize the concept of societal resilience. For a society that has long been polarized over the threat that China poses and the steps that Taiwan should take to protect itself, growing acceptance of the need to fortify Taiwan's society is a significant shift. Sharp divisions remain, but increasingly they are over what measures to take rather than the underlying need to enhance Taiwan's resilience.

Many challenges persist. The high quality of life in Taiwan and the absence of day-to-day dangers create a complacency in the population that will continue to challenge the government's efforts to instill vigilance and to make personal sacrifices appear too costly. Enduring differences in perspectives between the ruling and opposition parties about how to deal with Beijing mean that however much "resilience" has become an acceptable concept, the process will continue to be stalled by intense debates at regular turns. Nevertheless, the growing acceptance of the need for Taiwan to build its resilience, evident in the way that local officials, private sector representatives, and civil society actors talk about—and criticize—the initiative, is an important foundation for future work.

Alongside the shift in mentality, the central government has made strides in identifying Taiwan's key vulnerabilities and in directing ministries, local government, and civil society to amass the resources and develop emergency plans for response. The combined efforts have produced a long list of outcomes on paper. At this early stage in the resilience-building process, Taiwan should develop more of everything—to build redundancies in resources and to design backup plans for their backup plans (whether for the allocation of Taiwan's satellite bandwidth and energy resources, or for how private hospitals should respond in an emergency).

Much work remains to be done. To ensure that these plans work will require regular and continuous review, verification, and practice, coordinated across government and society and supported by further central government initiative and investments. To ensure that multiple lines of efforts are working toward a common objective the government should consider defining what a successful resilience strategy looks like in concrete terms. While some officials state the goal is to maintain the "continuous operation of society" for six months in a Chinese quarantine or blockade, others are less clear or even uncertain about the overall objective they are working toward.

Taiwan's resilience will also depend on the support of the international community. There is confidence within the government that Taiwan can develop the necessary plans and stockpile the necessary materials to endure a multi-month Chinese blockade.¹⁷⁰ Greater international support, however, will likely be necessary for Taiwan to withstand more extreme scenarios. Because the government's initiatives are centered on civilian resilience—rather than that of the military—

the space for cooperation with international partners is substantial.

The United States and its key regional allies—Japan, the Philippines, and Australia—should engage in regular discussions with Taiwan about the types of Chinese gray-zone activities that are most likely to emerge and the probability of various scenarios to ensure the sharing of information and threat perceptions. Discussions could also center on how humanitarian goods can be supplied to the island in the event of a blockade or a war. Significant space to cooperate exists on discrete issues that reflect shared priorities. For instance, the United States and Taiwan could work together to de-risk pharmaceutical supply chains. The two governments could discuss with Japan the need to strengthen their mutual subsea cable repair capacity as global capacity fails to keep up with the pace of cable construction and increasing risks.¹⁷¹

Consistent and public demonstrations of international support to Taiwan's resilience efforts will boost the Taiwan people's confidence in the effectiveness of their own efforts and increase their willingness to fight. By assisting Taiwan to enhance its resilience, like-minded countries can contribute to strengthening deterrence and preserving peace in the Taiwan Strait.

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